

HAVERFORDWEST
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1947

W. J. Y. SPEEDY,
M.B., B.Ch., L.R.C.P. & S., D.P.H.

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ESTIMATED MID-YEAR POPULATION FOR 1947—20,090.

NATURAL INCREASE OF POPULATION FOR 1947—138.

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DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT.
10, PICTON PLACE,
HAVERFORDWEST.

July, 1948.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my report upon the work carried out by the Public Health Department of the Council during the year 1947. I must express my gratification for the assistance and co-operation given by all officials, especially Mr. Owen-Evans, and members of the Council.

A first class team, with youth and enthusiasm, under the able guidance of Mr. Owen-Evans, is at the disposal of the Council. The area to be covered is a large one, but I have no doubt that all matters affecting the Public Health will be dealt with speedily and efficiently.

With the hope that the following pages may prove interesting and informative.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

W. J. Y. SPEEDY,

District Medical Officer.

DEATHS & DEATH-RATES.

	Male.	Female.	Total
Total Deaths during the year :—	134	124	258

The Death-Rate for the year, *i.e.*, number of deaths per 1,000 of the population is 12.84. This compares favourably with the Rate of 13.2 for the County of Pembrokeshire, but is slightly greater than the Rate of 12.0 for the whole of England and Wales.

<i>The causes of Death were as follows :—</i>	Male	Female	Total
Diseases of the Heart & Circulatory System	32	32	64
Cancer (all forms)...	24	20	44
Infectious Diseases (including T.B.) ...	16	13	29
Diseases of the Brain and Nervous System	11	10	21
Premature Births, Birth Injuries, etc. ...	8	8	16
Diseases of the Kidneys & Urinary System	10	5	15
Violent Deaths ...	6	7	13
Tuberculosis ...	8	4	12
Diseases of the Digestive System ...	2	3	5
Diseases associated with Pregnancy and Child Birth ...	nil	2	2
Unclassified ...	17	20	37
Totals	134	124	258

Cancer is the cause of 17% total deaths. This is a high figure, and gives rise to some concern.

Tuberculosis is the cause of 4.7 total deaths. This also is a high figure.

Infants deaths (i.e., under 1 year of age) during year :—

Male	Female	Total
12	10	22

This gives an Infantile Mortality Rate (*i.e.*, number of deaths of infants under 1 year per 1,000 births) of 55.5. The corresponding Rate for the County of Pembroke is 48.1, and for the whole of England and Wales is 41. So it will be seen that the Infantile Mortality in the the District is somewhat above the average.

BIRTHS & BIRTH-RATES.

The following is a summary of Births during the year :—

LIVE BIRTHS.	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate...	181	188	369
Illegitimate ...	12	15	27
Totals	193	203	396

STILL-BIRTHS.

			Male	Female	Total
Legitimate...	...	...	8	6	14
Illegitimate	...	...	1	—	1
		Totals	9	6	15

The above figures give a Birth-Rate of 19.7 *i.e.*, 19.7 births per 1,000 of the population. The Birth-Rate for the County of Pembroke is 16.2, and the average Birth-Rate for the whole of England and Wales is 20.5. It will thus be seen that the Birth-Rate in the District is well up to average.

The Illegitimate Birth-Rate is approximately 68, which is somewhat greater than the average Rate of 52 for the whole of England and Wales.

The Still-Birth Rate is 37, which also is higher than the average Rate of 24 for the whole of England and Wales.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following Infectious Diseases were notified during the year :—

Measles	...	...	...	47
Pneumonia	...	...	...	9
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	8
Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis)	...	...	...	4
Diphtheria	...	...	...	4
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	2
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	...	1

The appearance of Poliomyelitis during the summer was viewed with some concern, although, in view of the number of cases throughout Britain, it was not entirely unexpected. Fortunately the disease remained localised and fizzled out after a few cases. Intensive investigations were made in the cases which did occur, but no definite conclusions as to the source or the spread of the disease were formed.

There was no undue prevalence of any other infectious disease.

The following deaths occurred from Infectious Disease :—

Bronchitis & Pneumonia	...	18 deaths
Influenza	...	4 deaths
Cerebro. Spinal Fever	...	1 death
Whooping Cough	...	1 death

Deaths from Infectious Diseases account for 9.3% of total deaths.

TUBERCULOSIS

The number of fresh cases during the year were :—

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	19	(23)
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis		7	(8)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total		<u>26</u>	<u>(31)</u>

The figures in brackets are these for the last recorded year, *i.e.*, 1945, and it will be seen that there has been some improvement in the number of both Pulmonary and Non-Pulmonary cases.

Eleven premises were disinfected following Infectious Disease during the year.

HOUSING

During the year priority for housing has been given to the Agricultural Worker. But the Council has also a responsibility for the housing welfare of all the working classes in the District, particularly where these are inadequately housed, or overcrowded, or both.

At January 1st, 1947 there were 680 families requiring re-housing; during the year 31 families were re-housed in permanent homes and 47 families temporarily re-housed in hutments, etc.; at December 31st, 1947, there were still 602 families requiring re-housing.

At January 1st, 1947 there were 184 cases of overcrowding; 19 cases of over-crowding were relieved during the year; at December 31st, 1947 there were still 178 cases of overcrowding.

At the Rate of progress indicated by these figures the Housing problem will continue indefinitely: It is hoped that within a reasonable time priority for housing will be given to the inadequately housed and overcrowded.

Every effort should be made to ensure that when hopelessly unfit houses become vacant that they will not once again become occupied. When this occurs it means that the housing evils of the District are increasing instead of decreasing.

During the year 2 Demolition orders were served. No actual demolition was carried out, but undertakings from the owners that the premises would not be used for human habitation were accepted.

As a result of informal notices, 173 repairs were carried out on premises during the year. Two Formal notices were served, and both these were complied with.

New houses under construction in 1947 numbered 86 ; 31 new houses were completed during the year. It is estimated that a further 134 houses will be completed in 1948.

Hutments, or temporary houses, are situated in the District as follows :—

Trecwn	...	...	31 families
Solva No. 1	...	...	22 „
Solva No. 3	...	...	12 „
Hayscastle (Technical)	...	...	8 „
Hayscastle (Domestic)	...	...	8 „
Talbenny	...	...	9 „

The condition of these huts varies considerably. Some are reasonably good whilst others are most unsatisfactory. There is no doubt that the health of some of the occupants of these huts, especially children, is prejudiced by their living conditions. In such cases the huts should be properly maintained, or rendered unfit for habitation and alternative accommodation found for the inhabitants.

Satisfactory housing is one of the biggest factors in the maintenance of Public Health. Time and money spent in housing will be amply repaid in other directions.

WATER SUPPLIES

The sources of water supply in the District are many and varied. It is estimated that approximately 32% premises in the District have a piped water supply. The remaining 68% are supplied from wells and springs. The number of premises connected to water mains during the year numbered 43. Three new regional water schemes were under construction during the year, and when completed should raise considerably the percentage of premises with a piped supply.

The supervision of piped water, as regards freedom from harmful bacteria and chemicals, is a relatively easy matter. But similar supervision of the many wells and springs is well nigh impossible. For this reason the attainment of a 100% piped water supply should be a primary object. This, in fact, should take precedence over sewerage. The chief danger with primitive methods of sewage disposal is the contamination of water supplies ; if water supply is all piped, and hence controlled, then the dangers attached to primitive sewage disposal are greatly diminished. The task of sewerage the District can then be accomplished with an easier mind.

For the bacteriological and chemical control of water supplies in the District the Council has a contract with the Public Analyst at Carmarthen. During the year 15 chemical analyses and 54 bacteriological samples of water were taken. All chemical analyses were satisfactory, but 13 bacteriological samples were unsatisfactory. These unsatisfactory samples came chiefly from wells in the District, and action was taken to safeguard the consumers.

There are many wells in the District used as sources of water supply which are unsatisfactory. Trouble has arisen, and will continue to arise from these wells until the following requirements are complied with :—

- 1.—The well covered in.
- 2.—Suitably fenced off to exclude animals.
- 3.—Surrounding ground concreted and drained away from the well.
- 4.—No cesspit, septic tank, manure heap, or other accumulation of waste matter to be within 100 feet of the well.

The Council should by Bye-law, or otherwise, insist on the minimum requirements being adhered to in the case of every well the water from which is used for human consumption. Otherwise responsibility cannot be accepted for the purity of the water.

While it is true that disease attributable to water is at present rare, it must be remembered that this has been due to unceasing efforts to ensure a safe water. If standards are allowed to be relaxed the reward may be an outbreak of water-borne disease, *e.g.*, typhoid fever, dysentery, cholera, and other less serious conditions. It is estimated that over 70% samples taken from wells during the year were unsatisfactory.

The Council has power to enforce property owners to connect their premises to the water mains where such is reasonable. This is a power which should be used to the full.

HYGIENE & SANITATION

General Nuisances.—During the year 78 Informal notices for the abatement of nuisances were served; 65 of these were complied with. Two Formal notices were also served, and complied with.

Sewerage.—It is estimated that approximately 2% premises in the District are connected to a permanent Sewage Disposal System, and these premises chiefly consist of the Council's Housing Estates. This is a small percentage even allowing for the rural nature of the District. Part of a new Sewage Scheme was commenced at Merlin's Bridge during the year. There are several built-up areas in the District which require sewerage, including Broad Haven, Little Haven, Solva, St. Davids, Llangwm, and Letterston.

Refuse Disposal.—Approximately 29% premises in the District have their refuse collected by the Council. This figure could be increased with beneficial results to Public Health. Weekly collections are made in the following sub-districts :—Merlin's Bridge, Freystrop, Llangwm, Solva, Llanstadwell, St. Davids, Broad Haven, Little Haven, Tiers X, Johnston, Steynton, Talbenny, Letterston, Mathry, Croesgoch, Cernhedryn, Newgale, Haycastle, Slade Lane, Clarbston Road, Spittal, Trecwn, and North Prendergast.

Refuse is disposed of at tipping grounds situated at Freystrop, Talbenny, and St. Davids. Controlled tipping, especially with a view to re-claiming land, is probably the most economic way of disposing of refuse. Many recreation grounds, parks and housing estates of various local authorities have resulted from land re-claimed in this manner. Controlled tipping means the depositing of refuse in layers of special dimensions, and the immediate covering with soil or other suitable material. Also, the tipping ground should be sufficiently wired in to prevent the dispersal of papers and tins over the surrounding land. These requirements are not always adhered to, with the result that a nuisance arises.

Many receptacles, or bins, provided by house-holders for holding refuse, are unsatisfactory. Such receptacles should be made of metal, be of sufficient size to hold the required amount of refuse without overflowing, and be fitted with an air-tight lid.

Control of Vermin.—Rodent control campaigns are carried out in conjunction with the Pests Department of the Pembrokeshire Agricultural Executive Committee. During the year 105 surveys for rat infestation were carried out, and the degree of infestation was estimated as moderate. As a result of action taken it is estimated that 560 rats were destroyed.

One of the Council's employees is a trained Rodent Operator ; there should be at least 2 trained operators.

No reports of other types of infestation were received during the year.

Offensive Trades.—Nil to report.

Smoke Abatement.—Nil to report.

Public Conveniences.—Public conveniences are situated at Whitesands, Newgale, and Broad Haven. Further conveniences are desirable in the following sub-districts :— Solva, Llangwm, St. Davids, Letterston, and Little Haven. A satisfactory arrangement for the supervision of Public Conveniences is urgently required, as they are being mis-used.

Knacker's Yard.—The general hygienic standard at these premises is reasonably good. But to obviate any risk to Public Health incinerators should be constructed for the destruction of all waste material. This should be one of the conditions requested by the Council when applications are made for renewal of licence.

The two Knacker's Yards in the District are situated at Camrose & Wiston.

FOOD CONTROL

Twenty-seven consignments of food were inspected during the year. Food found to be unsound, and condemned, amounted to 1166lbs. The condemned food consisted chiefly of tinned foods and bacon.

The number of Registered Premises under the Food and Drugs Act 1938, is 7. These are :—

Ice-cream Premises	...	...	2
Prepared Food Premises	...	...	3
Knacker's Yards	...	...	2
Slaughter Houses	...	...	nil

The transportation and delivery of food, particularly bread and meat, to the consumer is in many cases unsatisfactory. Firm action is required in those cases which fail to conform to standards laid down by Statute.

MILK SUPPLIES

The following is the summary of Milk Producers and Retailers in the District.

	Designated	Non-Designated	Total
Producer-Wholesalers	310	973	1,283
Producer-Retailers	25	58	83
Retailers only	1	3	4

Approximately 28% of the milk consumed in the District is Designated, *i.e.*, T.T. or accredited milk. It is estimated that 7% of milk consumed is Pasteurised.

Nine-hundred inspections of Cowsheds & Dairies were carried out during the year. 218 samples of milk were taken for bacteriological examination ; of these 51 samples, or almost $\frac{1}{4}$, were unsatisfactory.

As will be readily seen from the above figures, the bulk of milk consumed in the District is Un-graded, *i.e.*, milk produced from cows with little supervision as to their freedom from disease, especially Bovine Tuberculosis. The danger here lies in fact that such milk may transmit serious diseases to the human consumers. Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis, Typhoid Fever, Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, & Poliomyelitis (Infantile Paralysis) are some of the diseases which may be, directly or indirectly, attributed to milk. Bovine Tuberculosis, especially in children result in life long invalidism and suffering. Pasteurisation is the only method of ensuring a safe milk, more especially so if the milk is non-designated. Milk from Tuberculin Tested herds can be assumed to be reasonably safe.

A matter of some importance in the production of a clean milk is the supply of piped water to Dairy Farms. The cleanliness of milk will never be really satisfactory, in spite of all modern equipment, until there is an adequate supply of pure water available in cowsheds and dairies. This is far from being the case in the District.

There is also a general lack of facilities for the cleansing and sterilisation of milking machines and dairy equipment. The use of so-called 'Hot' water gives a false impression. The only satisfactory method of sterilising equipment is by steam.

The bottling of milk, in the absence of proper facilities for sterilisation of the bottles, is Unsatisfactory. In these cases the milk would probably reach a higher bacteriological standard if bottling was omitted altogether.

FACTORIES & WORKSHOPS

There are 129 premises in the District subject to the Factories Act 1937. The chief premises concerned are Blacksmiths Shops, Joiners' Yards, Boot Repair Shops, and Vehicle Repair Shops. There are no dangerous trades.

Seventy-three inspections of the above premises were carried out during the year; 18 defects were found, and 16 of these were remedied. Twelve written notices were served upon owners. Defects found chiefly consisted of general lack of cleanliness, insufficient sanitary accomodation, and badly drained floors.

There are no out-workers in the District.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

One-hundred children in the District were immunised against Diphtheria during the year. Improvement upon this figure will be necessary during 1948.

The object aimed at in Diphtheria Immunisation is to immunize every child before it reaches one year of age; this to be re-inforced at the age of 5 to 6 years, when the child commences school, and again at the age 10 to 11 years for protection during the remainder of school-life.

To appreciate the effect that Immunisation has had upon the incidence and mortality of Diphtheria the following statistics for the whole of England and Wales may be interesting :—

Year	Cases of Diphtheria	Deaths	%Deaths to cases
1935	65,084	3,408	5.2
1941	50,797	2,641	5.2
1942	41,404	1,827	4.4
1943	34,662	1,371	3.9
1944	29,949	934	3.1
1945	25,246	722	2.8
1946	18,283	472	2.5
1947	10,469	245	2.3

An intensified Immunisation Campaign was commenced in 1941 and has been going on since then. The results of this campaign are seen in the rapidly decreasing number of Cases & Deaths from Diphtheria each year.

It should be noted that as from July 5th, 1948, Diphtheria Immunisation is the responsibility of the County Council.

Four cases of Diphtheria occurred in the District during the year, but there were no deaths.

PERSONAL HEALTH SERVICES

The School Medical Service, the Maternity and Child Welfare Service, Home Nursing, Health Visiting, Domestic Helps, and Midwifery Service are the responsibility of the County Council

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The social conditions in the District are reasonably good, but the following require some consideration :—

1. **Housing.**—See section on Housing.

2. **Roads, Lanes & Footpaths.**—Many lanes and footpaths, over which children are required to travel to and from School, are in a regrettable state. During inclement weather mud and water make them prejudicial to the health of the children. This is a problem which is avoided by most Authorities in the County.

3. **Omnibus Services.**—During the year several complaints have arisen due to children being left behind either going to school, or returning from school.

The lack of bus shelters at bus stops throughout the District is detrimental to the health of the community.

Co-operation in these matters should be requested with the Omnibus Companies concerned.

4. **Entertainment Halls.**—In some Parish centres school halls are being used during the evenings for adult entertainment. In spite of all hygienic precautions this practice exposes children to serious risks. An occasional event of this nature would present little danger, but when occurring habitually the risk to the health of the children is considerable.

5. **Sanitation & Hygiene in Public Premises.**—The sanitary accommodation in public halls, public houses, Cafes, and other public premises is in many cases inadequate, and in some cases does not exist at all. The facilities for the cleaning of glasses in public houses, and the cleaning of crockery in Cafes are also generally inadequate. Whilst the cleanliness of food handlers, and facilities for their ablutions, leave much to be desired.

Unfortunately there is little Statutory power to set these matters right, but no opportunity of increasing the general standard of Hygiene should be missed.

